

U. S. Bureau of Education.
Societies for prevention of blindness.

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SOCIETIES FOR PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

The Maryland Society for the Prevention of Blindness reports that, through the efforts of the educational committee, talks on the prevention of blindness have been given to many clubs, settlements, associations, Y. W. C. A.'s, and to other workers in the city. Leaflets have been prepared and distributed, and a plan has been proposed to organize the teaching of midwives in Baltimore.

The society has given special attention to ophthalmia neonatorum. They also are attempting to safeguard the children by establishing systematic examination of children's eyes in school.

The Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs has given especial attention to the prevention of infant blindness, and has prepared and sent out through different health departments simple directions for the care of newborn babies.

The American Association for the Conservation of Vision, Dr. F. P. Lewis, Buffalo, N. Y., president, states in a little pamphlet that there are over 100,000 blind people in the United States, and that in 30,000 of these cases the loss of sight was preventable. The purpose of this association—

is to endeavor to obtain effective action through the health boards for the control of ophthalmia neonatorum and other infectious diseases of the eye, to secure in factories and workshops adequate lighting and more general use of protective devices to prevent accidents to the eyes, to extend knowledge, through the help of illuminating engineers, architects, and others, as to the best methods of illumination in public buildings and in our homes, and to enlist the cooperation of all who, through interest in the subject or through their occupation, can aid in preventing the unnecessary loss of eyes through carelessness or ignorance.

The work is in charge of some of the ablest men in the country, specialists, practical philanthropists, and financiers, but it depends for its ultimate success on the support of the public.

The Kentucky Society for the Prevention of Blindness has issued several circulars concerning the care of the eyes of newborn babies, and also warning people against the dangers of trachoma, which is quite prevalent in some of the mountain sections of that State.

In the third report of the *Ohio Commission for the Blind*, made in 1910, to the governor, it is stated that the commission proposes:

(1) To continue through a number of years educating the public for the saving of sight.

(2) To forward and initiate movements for the profitable employment of the sightless.

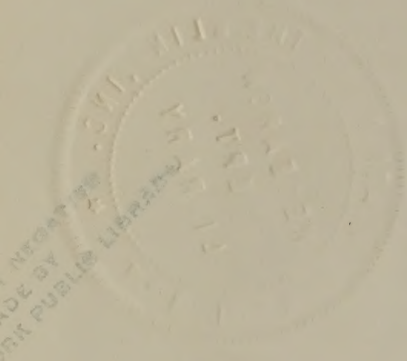
(3) To provide home teachers for those who in adult years have become blind, and so to ameliorate their condition.

To carry forward such a program calls for the undivided attention and service of a competent superintendent, with sufficient funds to make his work really effective.

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The social service work at the *Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary*, as outlined in their fifth annual report, may be summarized briefly as follows:

In the last five years the social service department has made over 5,000 visits to the homes of poor patients, and in addition has made a special study of contagious diseases of the eye in infants (ophthalmia neonatorum), visiting 496 cases after discharge from the hospital; has given great assistance in the effective campaign in the city and State toward the prevention of blindness; has studied the relation of industrial accidents to total or partial blindness in wage earners; and has established a class for the treatment of tuberculosis of the eye, making about 300 visits each year to this class of patients alone.

The committee on prevention of blindness of the *New York Association for the Blind* was organized for the purpose of preventing unnecessary injury or loss of sight from any cause and is, therefore, endeavoring to eliminate ophthalmia neonatorum, trachoma, and other preventable eye infections, to prevent blindness from drinking or inhaling wood alcohol, eye injuries in the industries, and impairment of vision from improper lighting, and also the use of glazed paper in school books.

The committee carries on its work through investigations, educational publicity, cooperation with all organizations which can be helpful, and through influencing certain legislation. In the fourth annual report of the committee it is stated that—

The educational work of the committee as carried on through the year has consisted of the publication and distribution of literature, public speaking, the loaning of exhibits and lantern slides, and the writing of magazine articles and press notices.

The committee has published during the year a ninth edition of its circular No. 1, "The Prevention of Blindness," containing practical suggestions for the preservation of sight; a second edition of No. 4, "Directions to Mothers, Midwives, and Nurses for the Prevention of Ophthalmia Neonatorum," in the four foreign languages, Yiddish, Polish, Italian, and German, and two editions of its third annual report for the year ending November 1, 1911.

During the year 19,573 publications have been distributed; 11,648 in New York State, 7,805 in States outside of New York, and 120 in foreign countries.

Addresses and talks on ophthalmia neonatorum, midwifery, lighting, and various phases of the work have been given by members of the committee and the executive secretary before the Central Nurses' Club, of New York City, before the International Conference on Hygiene and Demography, and before the Illuminating Engineering Society.

The committee's exhibits on ophthalmia neonatorum and other phases of preventable blindness have been shown at 16 conferences or meetings in 6 different States, while 2 new exhibits have been prepared, one being sold to the University of Texas for use by its extension department, and the other, consisting of three large screens on the subject of trachoma, being incorporated in the Italian neighborhood child welfare exhibit prepared by the New York child welfare committee. Sets of lantern slides, in addition to frequent use in New York State, have been loaned to social welfare workers in four other States.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, in connection with its general educational work to enable the blind to become self-supporting citizens, is, through its field worker and in many other ways, doing effective educational work for the prevention of blindness, the education of midwives, the instruction of mothers concerning the care and treatment of their children, in urging the adoption of better laws for the prevention of blindness, and in the enforcement of the laws now on the statute books. In addition, the commission sends out an exhibit on the conservation of eyesight to various meetings, to public libraries, and to the various health agencies throughout the State.

The commission was authorized under a law passed in 1906. Its chief concern, however, has to do with the needs of the adult blind and helping to establish them in self-supporting occupations. Its health education work, while important, is more or less incidental to its main purpose.

DENTAL HYGIENE SOCIETIES.

The National Mouth Hygiene Association has planned a nation-wide campaign for the purpose of (1) bringing about legislation which will permit local boards of health and boards of education to cooperate in the establishment of a complete system of medical and dental inspection and in the establishment and maintenance of medical and dental clinics to care for the indigent poor. (2) To secure legislation which will make it possible to protect the public from that class of dental practice which is a menace not only to the individual but to the health of the community. (3) To secure legislation which will not only improve the conditions surrounding the teaching profession of this country, but to enable boards of education to pay salaries commensurate with the service rendered.

One of the most interesting experiments in oral hygiene and its relation to general intellectual development of children was that undertaken by this committee in Cleveland. While their findings must of necessity be tentative, on account of the number of children experimented on, nevertheless it is a start in the right direction, and the evidence goes to show that, other things being equal, those children whose mouths are well cared for are thereby enabled through the influence of better health to do a higher grade of intellectual work than those whose mouths and teeth are ill kept and in an insanitary condition.

The direct educational work of this committee consists largely in making known to the people the serious condition of the mouths of children of all classes, cause of this widespread disease, and the

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